

P 112044Z APR 02  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8035  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

id: 2745  
date: 4/11/2002 20:44  
refid: 02BOGOTA3281  
origin: Embassy Bogota  
classification: SECRET  
destination: 02BOGOTA3101  
header:  
P 112044Z APR 02  
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8035  
INFO NSC WASHDC  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
SECDEF WASHDC  
DIRONDCP WASHDC  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA  
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA  
AMEMBASSY QUITO  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
USCINCSO MIAMI FL

----- header ends -----

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 003281

E.O. 12958: DECL: 4/4/2012  
TAGS: PREL PTER MOPS VE CO  
SUBJECT: DETAILS ON FARC CAMPS IN VENEZUELA

NOFORN

REF: BOGOTA 3101

CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR ANNE W. PATTERSON. REASON: 1.5  
(B) AND (D)

¶1. (S/NF) SUMMARY: COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT, MILITARY AND CIVILIAN INTERLOCUTORS UNEQUIVOCALLY CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF FARC CAMPS IN VENEZUELA (REFTEL). EMBASSY INTERLOCUTORS IN THE GOC FEEL THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ORDERED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS TO TURN A BLIND EYE TO FARC AND ELN CAMPS. A RELIABLE SOURCE GAVE POLOFF DESCRIPTIONS AND COORDINATES FOR CAMPS IN VENEZUELA. THE GOC, FOR THE TIME BEING, IS PROBABLY CONTENT TO LET THE ISSUE PLAY OUT IN THE PRESS AND WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO CHAVEZ. THE COLMIL, HOWEVER, WILL MOST LIKELY CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) SEVERAL SOURCES, INCLUDING A COLMIL HELICOPTER PILOT (REFTEL), THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER, AND A REPORTER FOR XXXXXXXXXXXX, HAVE GIVEN REPORTS ON HOW TO ARRIVE AT FARC CAMPS IN VENEZUELA. THE ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE POLCOUNS A MAP WITH THE SITE OF ONE FARC CAMP APPROXIMATELY 1.2 MILES INTO VENEZUELAN TERRITORY HIGHLIGHTED (8-45-10N, 72-40-15W). NOTE: POST WILL PROVIDE A COPY TO WHA/AND. END NOTE.

¶3. (C) DIRECTIONS WERE GIVEN TO EMBOFF BY A REPORTER FROM XXXXXXXXXXXX INDICATING THAT SHE DROVE FOR 35 MINUTES AFTER ENTERING VENEZUELA TO GET TO ONE OF THE CAMPS AND FOR 20 MINUTES TO GET TO THE OTHER. THE CAMPS SHE VISITED WERE ACROSS THE BORDER FROM TIBU, NORTE DE SANTANDER.

¶4. (S/NF) SEPARATELY, A VERY RELIABLE COLOMBIAN SOURCE GAVE EMBOFF THE COORDINATES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF SEVERAL FARC CAMPS IN VENEZUELA. THE SOURCE SAID THESE CAMPS REPRESENTED "THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG," BUT WERE INDICATIVE OF THE LEVEL TO WHICH THE FARC HAS SET UP OPERATIONS IN VENEZUELA. HE ELABORATED THAT IT IS AN OPEN SECRET FOR THE VENEZUELANS THAT THESE CAMPS EXIST. A CAMP IN THE AREA FROM WHICH THE ATTACK ON CARRENO'S TROOPS PROBABLY CAME IS LOCATED IN VENEZUELA DIRECTLY OPPOSITE FROM A COLOMBIAN AIRSTRIP. THE LOCATION OF THE CAMP IS 09-08-18N, 072-50-54W. THE CAMP IS REPORTEDLY CAPABLE OF HOUSING BETWEEN 100-120 FARC GUERRILLAS. ANOTHER CAMP ABOUT ONE KILOMETER INTO VENEZUELAN TERRITORY IS LOCATED ON THE SOCUAVO DEL SUR RIVER (0859N, 07233W).

¶5. (S/NF) THE SOURCE ALSO GAVE INFORMATION ABOUT A CAMP LOCATED ON THE CATATUMBO RIVER ACROSS FROM NORTE DE SANTANDER DEPARTMENT NORTH OF THE CITY OF CUCUTA (9-21N, 072-44W) IN WHICH ABOUT 120 FARC GUERRILLAS WERE COUNTED IN LATE FEBRUARY. ANOTHER CAMP HAS ALSO BEEN IDENTIFIED ACROSS THE BORDER FROM RIO DE ORO (08-37N, 072-39W). ANOTHER CAMP LOCATED NEAR SAN SIMON DE CUCUY (01168N, 066509W) HAS A GRASS AIRSTRIP. YET ANOTHER CAMP WHICH APPEARS TO BE A TRAINING FACILITY IS LOCATED IN THE AREA OF GUASDUALITO, APURE DEPARTMENT, VENEZUELA (07-15N, 70-44W). UNIDENTIFIED FOREIGN ADVISORS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN SEEN IN THIS CAMP.

¶6. (C) SINCE CHAVEZ CAME TO POWER, THE GOV HAS BROKEN OFF SEVERAL LONGSTANDING GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT CONTACTS, INCLUDING MILITARY TO MILITARY CONTACTS IN SEPTEMBER, ¶2000. THE GOC HAS REITERATED ITS DESIRE TO REINSTATE THE COLOMBIA-VENEZUELA BORDER COMMISSION AS IT TRIES TO MANAGE THE LATEST BORDER CRISIS IN A DIPLOMATIC WAY THAT WILL NOT PLACE FURTHER STRAIN ON THE ALREADY DELICATE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONSHIP. AFTER HAVING A UNIT AMBUSHED AND LOSING TROOPS TO FARC UNITS OPERATING OUT OF VENEZUELA ON MARCH 19, COLOMBIAN ARMY SECOND DIVISION COMMANDER GENERAL MARTIN CARRENO FELT THE NEED TO PUBLICLY ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS HIS TROOPS WERE FACING (REFTEL).

¶7. (C) COMMENT: THERE IS A MOUNTING BODY OF HARD EVIDENCE THAT THERE ARE FARC GUERRILLA CAMPS IN VENEZUELA. THE GOC, FOR THE TIME BEING, IS PROBABLY CONTENT TO LET THE ISSUE PLAY OUT IN THE PRESS AND WAIT TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO CHAVEZ. THE COLMIL, HOWEVER, WILL MOST LIKELY CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT, ESPECIALLY, IF THE ATTACKS FROM VENEZUELA LEAD TO MORE DEATHS AMONG COLOMBIAN UNITS, THE SPARK THAT LED GENERAL CARRENO TO GO PUBLIC IN THE MOST RECENT EVENT. POLOFFS WILL VISIT BUCARAMANGA, THE SITE OF SECOND DIVISION HEADQUARTERS, THE WEEK OF APRIL 15 TO DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH GENERAL CARRENO AND HIS STAFF.

PATTERSON

>

=====CABLE ENDS=====